The Long Island FISHERMAN

The Largest Weekly Sportfishing Magazine in the United States!

Volume 15, Number 49 **December 4th, 1980**

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"The Chesapeake is dying" and with it, the future of the striped bass. See Gary Diamond's article on page 22 for more on what's happening to the East Coast's major nursery ground.

COMING NEXT WEEK: **CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS**

Richard Reina — PUBLISHER
Al Ristori — ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Pete Barrett — NEW JERSEY EDITION
W. A. Muller — MANAGING EDITOR
Stu Miller — ADVERTISING MANAGER
Tim Coleman — NEW ENGLAND EDITION
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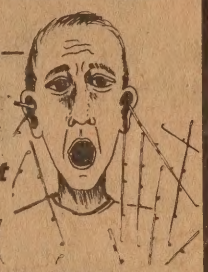

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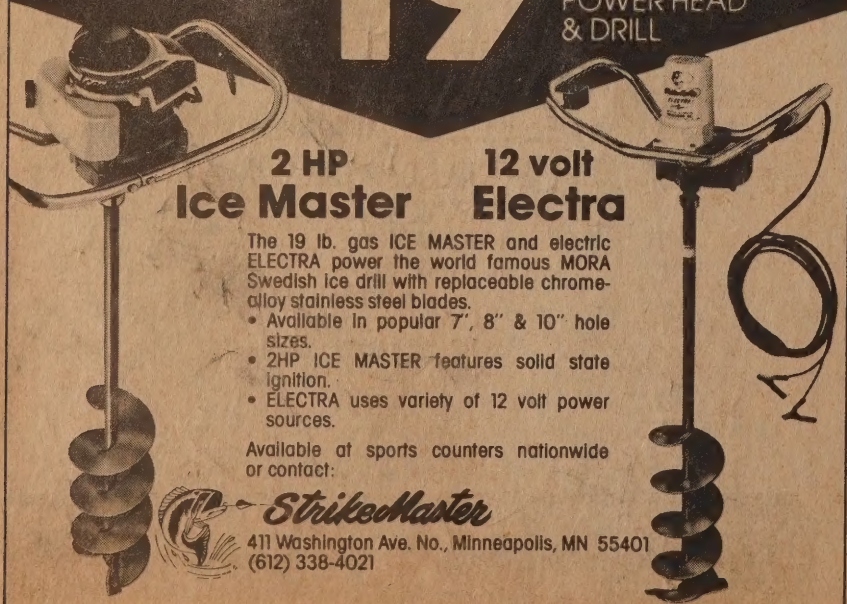

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CHUM LINES

CODFISH FEEDING HABITS

In reply to Mike Saracco's letter in Bill Muller's column *Fish Talk* (Issue #47), regarding the feeding habits of codfish. Perhaps I can help. Cod are one of Nature's hunters of the sea and at times, "old bucket-mouth" seems to have an insatiable appetite...as witness the many foreign objects having no food value often found during fish cleaning: wood, metal, remnants of foul weather gear, etc. Mr. Saracco mentioned that a cod never expects to find skimmer clam without its shell. I don't know about that, for I believe cod know all about shell-less skimmer clam. A cod's tough, wedge-shaped head is used to root out skimmer clams from the ocean floor. As a boy, I watched cod attempt to do this at the old New York Aquarium fish tanks. There were no clams to be found, of course; but the cod didn't know this—they were just doing what comes naturally. I'm sure cod know just what a naked skimmer clam tastes like. They have plenty of opportunity to learn as any codfisherman who has fished near a working skimmer dredge will tell you. Cod of all sizes feast on those broken skimmers. Cod will accept anything native to the sea, of course, but also objects that aren't; as, for instance, chicken heads (white only) which I've seen used successfully. When one considers that, it is not difficult to believe a succulent slice of skimmer clam is often the piece-de-resistance. *Matt Ahern.*

ACTIVE FLOUNDER

I just came back from Falmouth, Cape Cod and just had to tell you what I saw. All saltwater fish in larger saltwater tanks: striped bass, porgies, sea bass, blackfish and one flounder.

This flounder was laying in the back of the tank. I started hitting the glass with my nail. This flounder put his head up like a snake and looked around and came right up to the glass. I walked away and came back and did it again. Again the flounder started going crazy. I did this twice more and the same thing happened again. The little fish would come out of the sand and swim right up to the glass. All the rest of the fish in the tank just swam by. Is it possible that flounder hear when we hit our sinkers in the Sound. *B. Caramico, Bayside, N.Y.*

I have also had some experience with flounders in large tanks and I recall how aggressive they were. They seem to respond to both sight and sound very readily. We know that the senses of fish are the same ones that humans have; that is, they can see, hear, taste and smell. They also feel, but that

part of it doesn't come into play at a distance whereas all the other senses do. Flounders are basically inactive at night unless they are chased from where they are lying. Basically, this is because their night vision is poor. In fact, their day vision is much more restricted than that of the larger game fish. Considering how and where flounders feed, this isn't a major inconvenience. Thus, flounders rely mostly on their sense of taste and on sound sensing. They will use their eyesight effectively only in clear water or when they are close to their prey. So, indeed the flounders do respond to the bouncing of a sinker on the bottom but they do not hear it the way you and I do. They respond because the vibrations mean something to them. However, I have seen that work both for and against the fisherman. At times, the bouncing can spook them while at other times it will attract them. That's what makes fishing so exciting! Dr. W. A. Muller.

Pass It On...

MECLI NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

A call for volunteers to become involved in an active environmental group has gone out from the Marine Environmental Council of Long Island, Inc., based in Seaford. People interested in working with other environmentalists on marine water problems are requested to contact MECLI at P. O. Box 55, Seaford, or call Su 5-3139 evenings.

Meetings are held on Thursday nights in Seaford. Join a working involved organization and take an active part in preserving Long Island's marine environment—a very good cause.

For further information, call George Wilde (home) SU 5-3139 or (Bus.) MY 4-1000.

"CAPT. WONDERFUL," I PRESUME.

Captain Walt Scott of the Acme II has established his Freeport Charter Service providing a host of refreshing thoughts. Associate membership cost is nominal and will be limited to the best available services.

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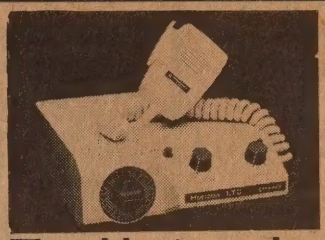

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CLUB NEWS

The annual election for officers and directors of the Great South Beach Mobile Sportfishermen for 1981 was held on November 20, 1980. Those elected to office were:

President: Edward Seeley
1st Vice-Pres.: Rick McDowell
Treasurer: Charles Rose
Secretary: Dorothy Naekel

The Great South Beach Mobile Sportfishermen are a surf fishing organization. At present we are seeking new members. Any one interested or would like further information, may drop us a line at P.O. Box 66, Patchogue, New York 11772.

New Products

GRADY WHITE INTRODUCES 25' INBOARD WAHOO

When Grady-White introduced the 255 Sailfish at the Miami Boat Show last year, sport fishermen from all over the world took notice of the wide-beamed, 25' outboard. Now, this North Carolina boat builder has added a straight inboard version of that same hull which could surpass even the sailfish in offshore popularity.

The 25' 4" Wahoo inboard has the same 9' 6" beam of the Sailfish, yet provides a surprising amount of added cockpit space by removal of the outboard motor well. Plus, with the engine amidships and a Jim Wynne designed propeller pocket, the Wahoo planes out at a mere 1800 RPM's. Top speed on the Wahoo with a 255 h.p. inboard is approximately 35 mph.

As in all Grady-Whites, the Wahoo's amenities cater to the sport fisherman. The motor box in the cockpit provides a slightly raised platform that's perfect for mounting a fighting chair. The cockpit sole is fiberglass lined and self-bailing. A five-foot-long insulated fishbox is built into the transom area along with a bait well that's available in an aerated version. The hardware is non-corrosive marinium. The wood trim is teak. Plus, two large storage compartments in the cockpit have fishing rig holder racks.

Underneath, in the walkaround cabin, the Wahoo has three berths, fold-down alcohol stove, icebox, sink, storage and 6' 3" of headroom. A head enclosure is standard and a shower is available.

Like Grady-White's other two, twenty-five footers, the Sailfish and the Kingfish, the Wahoo is designed for serious offshore fishermen. A tuna tower, outriggers, saltwater wash down system and rod holders are available.

The Wahoo is one of twenty Grady-White models from 19' to 25'. Grady-White is located in Greenville, North Carolina.

NEW SHIMANO MLX FAST CAST SPINNING REEL

Here's the best thing that's happened to spinning reels since skirted spools, which is just what you'll find in the new MLX Fast Cast (TM) series. But the key feature is not the spool; it's the unique (patent pending) Fast Cast bail trigger. This amazing device lets you open the bail with just one finger. You can actually make a cast with one hand behind your back. Try that with an ordinary reel. To make a cast, just reach out with the trigger finger of your casting hand, and in one motion, pick up the line and squeeze the bail trigger. The bail opens smoothly and you make your cast. Self-centering feature readies the bail by properly positioning the trigger under your casting finger. Just turn the handle backwards to self-center.

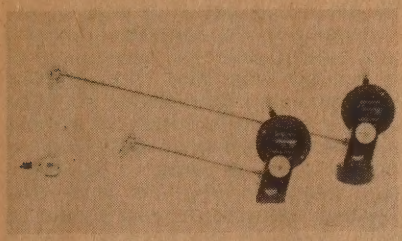
Here's a list of other key features that help make the MLX the most exciting ball bearing spinning reel Shimano has ever offered. Hard chromed brass roller line guide will not rust, corrode or chafe the line like ordinary metal rollers. Handle is reversible for left or right hand retrieve. Shimano's exclusive disc drag is super smooth, so is the hi-speed retrieve, the silent anti-reverse and so is the overall performance of Shimano's outstanding new MLX Fast Cast skirted spool spinning reels. There are two MLX models: MLX-20 for light tackle freshwater, and MLX-30 for medium duty fresh to light tackle saltwater.

QFor more information, write to: Shimano American Corporation, 205 Jefferson Rd., Parsippany, NJ 07054.

CORTLAND MICRON BASS LINE FOILS BIRDS'-NESTS

Cortland Micron Braided Bass Line is specially designed to eliminate the bass fishermen's worst headaches: birds'-nests and backlash. The secret is the line's controlled limpness and it specially processed polyester fiber. The diameter of the line is smaller than ordinary to reduce wind resistance and give longer, more accurate casts. Cortland's braided line has exceptional hook-setting ability because it is a low-stretch line that lies straight in the water without looping or corkscrewing. Micron

Braided Bass Line is available from Cortland Authorized Dealer Shops in "reel filler" spools that hold the exact yardage to fill a 5500C reel, or in single 1000-yard spools. Available in 10, 12, 15, 20 and 25 pound tests.



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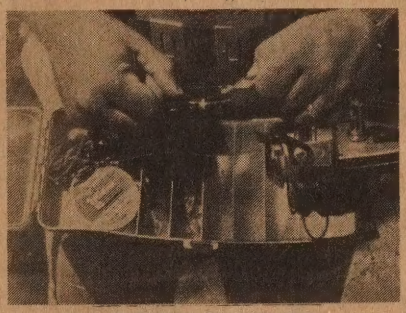
Penn, the world famous manufacturer of fishing reels and accessories, has a downrigger durably built to get you where the fish are: 10 to 200 feet down!

With the Penn Fathom-Master 620, you no longer need bulky wire rigs and heavy sinkers to get a lure deep. Simply attach your line to the 10 lb. Fathom-Trol® weight and lower into water by use of the exclusive Fathom-Master dragbrake system. This unique system provides for one-hand operation while lowering and stopping weight. During descent, crank handle does not turn. A real safety feature! 48-inch gold anodized boom has line guides to prevent cable from jumping pulley. Solid Swivel-Matic® base allows for 180° boom rotation and easily mounts on either side of boat or on the transom. Handy cable footage counter lets you precisely control the depth of lure.

The Penn Fathom-Master 600 is identical to the 620 with the exception of a 25 inch boom and a non-swivel base. Both downriggers are constructed of durable, non-corrosive materials and come with 200' of 135 lb. test stainless steel cable. Rod holder available as accessory.

For further information on the Fathom-Master 620 and 600 Downriggers, and the entire line of famous Penn products, write: Penn Reels, Dept. P, 3028 W. Hunting Park Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19132. Telephone (215) 229-9415.



FISHIN' PARTNER

Fishing life styles are changing. Today's anglers are a more mobile group of people on the move who like to travel light.

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The Fishin' Partner fits snugly against the body, freeing both hands of the angler for more important work. Press a stainless steel release, and the Fishin' Partner pivots forming a horizontal workbench and steady rest for the rod.

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Thanks to the adjustable, heavy duty two inch wide belting and no-nonsense, positive lock snap, the FISHIN' PARTNER is designed for family use. Dad, as well as his cycling younguns' will appreciate the two-handed freedom and not having to lug a 20 lb. Big Bertha box on that next family outing.

Attractively packed in an easy-to-wrap, illustrated box, the Fishin' Partner is a natural smile-maker when it comes time to buy a gift for that outdoors person. Targeted retail price is under $20. It's engineered and built in the USA by American sportsmen. Another fishing advancement by Berkley and Co. of Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360.

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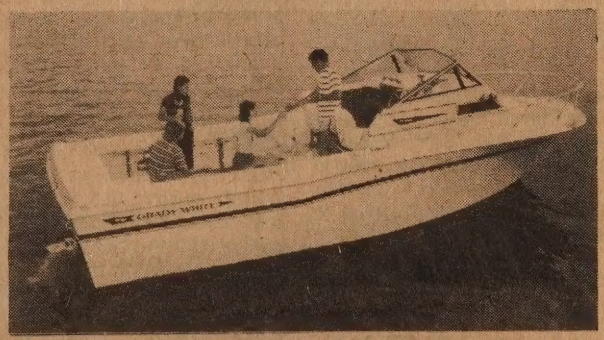

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In a previous column, I warned of the potential danger to billfish and shark populations should swordfish gillnetting prove successful on this coast—as it did on the West Coast, before being outlawed. Three California-based boats moved to New England this summer and initially had some success with this technique, which kills as indiscriminately as does inshore gillnetting. However, before local boats could start

NATIONAL SCENE

with Al Ristori

SWORDFISH GILLNETTING FLOPS

gearing up for the big slaughter, bad news started filtering back. It seems that catches in the gillnets were disappointing, and most of the swordfish being brought back by these boats were being harpooned during the day, with the nets being set at night. According to the National Coalition for Marine Conservation (NCMC) newsletter "Right Rigger," one gillnet set caught 600 blue sharks. The sharks tore the net to pieces and possibly saved the lives of many other sharks in the future in the process. The latest information from NCMC is that one of these boats had re-rigged for longlining, another was strictly harpooning, and the third was inactive.

Effort to Expand Dingell/Johnson Fund Will Move Ahead in New Congress

"Right Rigger" reports that while the move to expand the Dingell/Johnson Fund by adding a three percent excise tax on boat, motor, and trailer manufacturers failed to move foward in the present Congress, it will be pushed even harder in the coming session. While most people associated with the sport fishing industry support an expansion of the Dingell/Johnson Fund, there is a great deal of opposition to this approach. The boating industry fears that the three percent tax will further hurt already slumping sales, and also feels that non-fishing boat buyers shouldn't be taxed to support fisheries development. Nevertheless, the D/J expansion developed powerful allies in West Virginia Senator Jennings Randolph (one of the senior members of Congress) and Rep. John Breaux, Chairman of the Fisheries Subcommittee of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. Of course, Senator Randolph won't be nearly as powerful in the new Senate, as Republicans will be taking over the committee chairmanships.

The present D/J Fund gets its revenues from a ten percent excise tax on most fishing tackle. Though the tackle companies pay these funds directly to the government as they sell tackle at the wholesale level, it's the consumer who actually pays the bill. However, this is one Federal program that's met with general approval from all involved. The monies collected go back to the states for their own fisheries programs, and hardly any is lost in the bureaucratic shuffle. The tax is endorsed by the tackle industry, and there is even support within the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA) for extension of the tax to include some items that weren't originally covered—such as lines and tackle boxes. However, AFTMA has been reluctant to go along with the three percent tax on boat, motor, and trailer manufacturers—trade groups normally allied with the fishing industry on other issues.

Though the D/J Fund has done a great deal of good, there are problems with the way it's set up. The distribution formula involves a combination of license sales and the land area of the state. Only California and Texas make out very well under this formula, as they license saltwater fishermen. Since New York and New Jersey don't license saltwater anglers, a great deal of revenue is lost on that portion of the formula. On the other hand, New York does make out well on the land area aspect of the formula. Despite its long coastline, New Jersey loses out on land area and is very much shortchanged in the present formula. This system is so well-established at this point, that most state officials feel there is little hope of changing it. Yet, were the D/J Fund to be greatly increased by this potential new source of funding, the disparity between what New York and New Jersey receive (as compared with inland states) would be even greater. Therefore, it's important that we ask our legislators to get interested in this issue and insist on amendments to the formula. If area is to be a consideration, it should be water area—not land—that should be the consideration. Saltwater anglers should be credited to the coastal states on the basis of NMFS surveys.

The present D/J funding formula discriminates against saltwater anglers in two ways: first of all, they pay in at a disproportionately high rate and, secondly, they don't get a fair share of the program's benefits. According to government surveys, saltwater anglers spend more per capita on tackle than do their freshwater counterparts. That wouldn't make any difference if much of the monies returned to the states was used in saltwater projects. However, the state agencies often point to the fact that they're not getting any benefits from the non-licensed saltwater anglers (though they're still drawing funds from a pool enlarged considerably by saltwater taxes) and, as a result, are reluctant to expend their allocations in the marine area. This has traditionally been the case in New York. If there's going to be any change in the D/J at all, it's imperative that this inequity be remedied.

Japanese Longliners Active in October

A total of twenty-two Japanese longliners fished off the Atlantic Coast (from ninety miles southeast of Norfolk to one hundred ten miles southeast of New York City) in October and reported fair tuna fishing. Tuna accounted for forty percent of the longline catch, with bigeyes being the dominant species. Swordfish dominated the billfish catch, but made up only 4.7% of the total catch. Of course, all billfish must be returned unharmed, but the mortality rate remains high. Close to sixty percent of the billfish hooked are dead when they come up, though that applies to only about ten percent of the sharks. In October, the Japanese caught over 6,000 sharks, over 1,000 billfish, and about 5,000 fish of other species (all of which have to be returned) in the process of taking somewhat more than 8,000 tuna of various species. Given the high mortality rates on everything but sharks, it's easy to see that this fishery is still quite wasteful. Observers from the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Center tagged 117 sharks and 38 billfish during the month. That agency is also preparing task allowance plans to comply with the recently signed authorization bill for the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act. That bill requires 100% coverage of the foreign longliners, but the Center presently has only six observers proving about twenty percent coverage. They estimate that twenty-five additional trained observers will be needed for 100% coverage. There isn't much time left in which to acquire and train these people, as the authorization bill is effective on January 1, 1981.

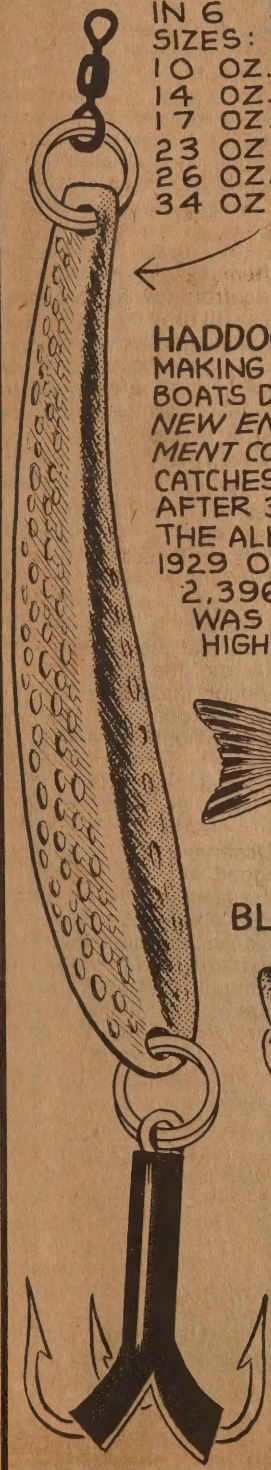
Rewards Offered for Tuna Tags

Some 1,600 tuna were tagged in the western Atlantic as a U.S. contribution to the ICCAT skipjack program. Most of the fish tagged were skipjack, but there were also a few blackfin tuna. Rewards of up to $500 will be given for return of the tags along with information on when, where, and how the fish were caught—plus the measurements. Every fisherman returning a tag gets $4 or a T-shirt, while the winner of an annual lottery gets the $500. Tags can be returned to the address in Spain that's on the tag; or to the Gulf Council, Lincoln Center, 5401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa. Florida 33609.

FISH & MARINE NEWS

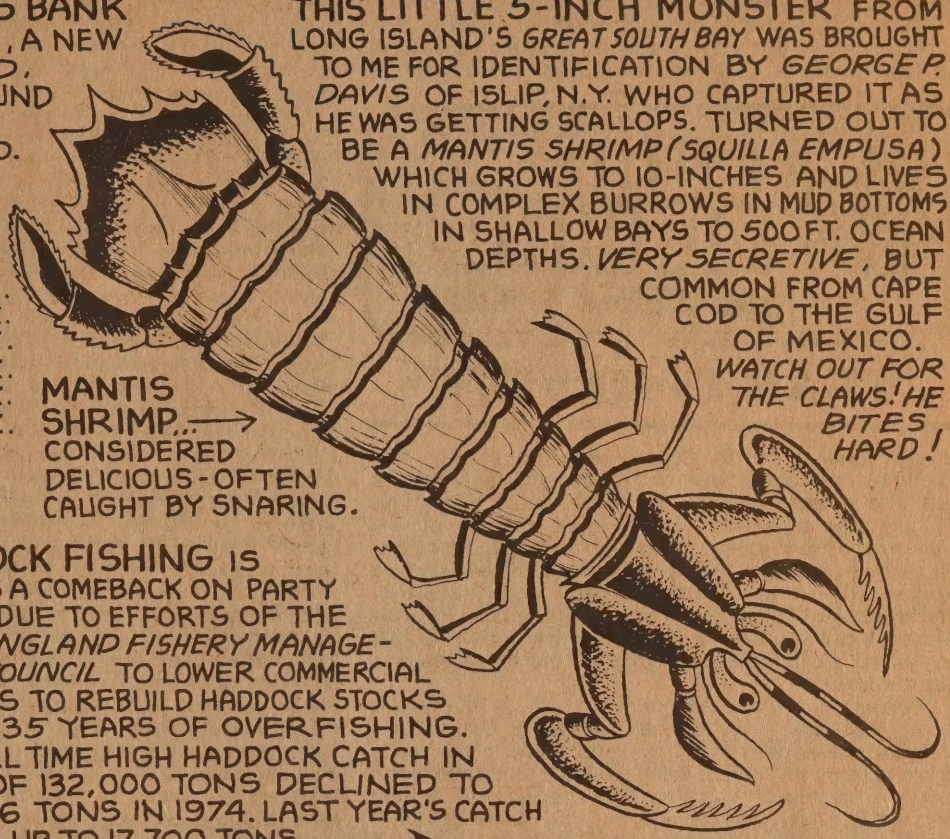
BY FRED GUARDINEER

THE GEORGES BANK CODFISH JIG, A NEW LURE PRODUCED, TESTED AND FOUND EFFECTIVE BY *M & M TACKLE CO.* OF STRATFORD, CONN. COMES IN 6 SIZES:
10 OZ.
14 OZ.
17 OZ.
23 OZ.
26 OZ.
34 OZ.

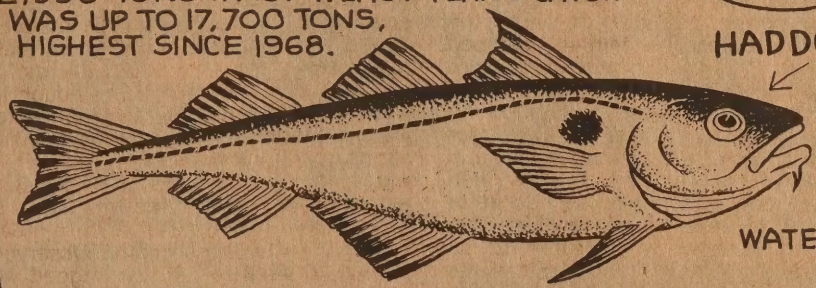


THIS LITTLE 5-INCH MONSTER FROM LONG ISLAND'S *GREAT SOUTH BAY* WAS BROUGHT TO ME FOR IDENTIFICATION BY *GEORGE P. DAVIS* OF ISLIP, N.Y. WHO CAPTURED IT AS HE WAS GETTING SCALLOPS. TURNED OUT TO BE A *MANTIS SHRIMP (SQUILLA EMPUSA)* WHICH GROWS TO 10-INCHES AND LIVES IN COMPLEX BURROWS IN MUD BOTTOMS IN SHALLOW BAYS TO 500 FT. OCEAN DEPTHS. *VERY SECRETIVE*, BUT COMMON FROM CAPE COD TO THE GULF OF MEXICO. *WATCH OUT FOR THE CLAWS! HE BITES HARD!*

MANTIS SHRIMP... → CONSIDERED DELICIOUS - OFTEN CAUGHT BY SNARING.

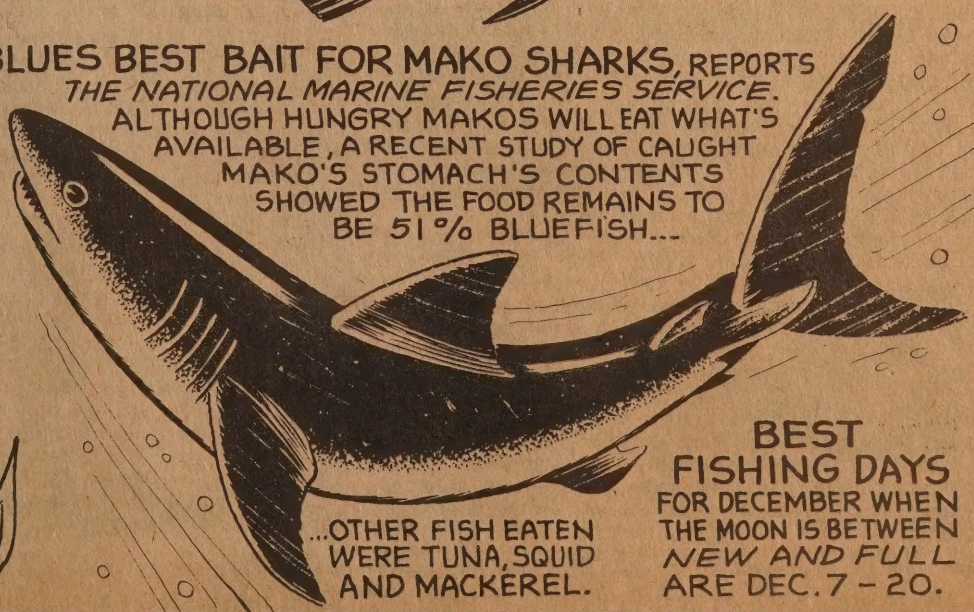


HADDOCK FISHING IS MAKING A COMEBACK ON PARTY BOATS DUE TO EFFORTS OF THE *NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL* TO LOWER COMMERCIAL CATCHES TO REBUILD HADDOCK STOCKS AFTER 35 YEARS OF OVERFISHING. THE ALL TIME HIGH HADDOCK CATCH IN 1929 OF 132,000 TONS DECLINED TO 2,396 TONS IN 1974. LAST YEAR'S CATCH WAS UP TO 17,700 TONS, HIGHEST SINCE 1968.



HADDOCK GROW TO 37 LBS. AND 44 INCHES. AVERAGE 1-5 LBS. MEMBER OF COD FAMILY. LIKES DEEP WATER, 150-450 FT.

BLUES BEST BAIT FOR MAKO SHARKS, REPORTS *THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE.* ALTHOUGH HUNGRY MAKOS WILL EAT WHAT'S AVAILABLE, A RECENT STUDY OF CAUGHT MAKO'S STOMACH'S CONTENTS SHOWED THE FOOD REMAINS TO BE 51% BLUEFISH...

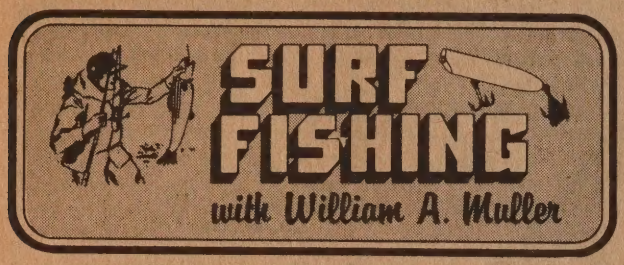


...OTHER FISH EATEN WERE TUNA, SQUID AND MACKEREL.

BEST FISHING DAYS FOR DECEMBER WHEN THE MOON IS BETWEEN *NEW AND FULL* ARE DEC. 7 - 20.

Seems the surf fishing season had its bright spots, but it also had far too many valleys. Like any other year, for those who showed up at the right spot and at the right time, there were blitzes. However, the blitzes were very few and so very far between.

Most surf fishermen complained about a lack of bait on the beach and this malady seemed to strike both North and South Shore with the same enthusiasm. The tip-off to



YEAR IN REVIEW

the poor quality of the season was the almost, and sometimes, total absence of vehicles at likely spots such as West End II and Montauk for most of the year. This situation was true even for a good portion of the Fall—which is astounding. It always has amazed me how, no matter how bad or good a year is, there will always be a few guys who will say, "Are you crazy? I had a great (or terrible) season!" It all depends upon your point of view and how lucky you are. Still, in this year I believe that there are so few of those exceptions out there that the year rates a lousy!

Perhaps the only real bright spot for the entire season, was the New York Surf Fishing Contest: its successful development and operation. The clubs really worked hard on this one to bring back the enthusiasm and spirit of interclub competition that specied surf fishing when the Schaefer Contest was the talk of the beach. It isn't important who won either, because that wasn't the true worth or value of the contest. Instead, in the clubs that actively participated, it seemed to stimulate more comradeship, there was a sense of helping to develop the skills of new members, and there was the spirit of fishing for a common cause. Hopefully the contest will live on for many years, and it should, because the clubs were able to do what Schaefer wasn't—to run the contest with minimum personal effort and at nominal cost. Schaefer folded because the cost of running the contest was monumental and growing. It shows what people can do when many are willing to shoulder a little portion of the work. Under those circumstances many can enjoy an activity without great inconvenience to specific people. The darn contest just ran so smoothly this year it was a credit to all those who participated. We should take a moment to thank all the individual club reporting officers for reporting timely and accurately, and a special thanks to Fred Schwab who was the Contest Officer. His monthly inspirational notes and detailed monthly reports kept us interested even when things looked hopeless.

We hope that more clubs will join for 1981. Look for announcements in "Club News," the "Surf Fishing" column, and elsewhere. The 1981 contest will begin in April; therefore, why not begin discussions in your club now so that all will be in readiness for next year.

Albeit that there were really no winners and losers in the first year of the Interclub Contest, there were plenty of losers on the beach. True, anyone who worked hard enough (and that meant endless hours for most in 1980) caught some quality fish here and there, but the hours to fish ratio increased dramatically over last year. I first began calculating this ratio some years ago in order to measure the success of my season with some degree of accuracy. In 1976, I reported a twenty-hours-to-point-fish ratio. That ratio fell to about five hours per point fish in 1977, increased to about ten hours per point fish in 1978, and fell to seven hours per point fish in 1979. In 1980 that ratio zoomed to over twenty hours per point fish! A poor surf fishing season seems to feed on itself too. It's hard to hold your concentration when there are few rewards for your effort and the lack of concentration interferes with the ability to catch fish. When you don't catch fish, you lose interest and then you may not fish. Obviously, if you aren't fishing, you can't catch fish. When people don't fish as hard, they also don't find those few situations where there are fish and thus there are less fish to hunt with reasonable expectations—and so on, and so on!

What were the bright spots? Let's begin with Long Island Sound, because we can dismiss it easily. The fishing in the Long Island Sound (beach only) was terrible. There were no prolonged runs of fish. Once in awhile a school charged the beach in various locations and if you were there you took a few, BUT there were no sustained fishing interludes. Why? Although there were plenty of sand eels in the Sound, those sand eels stayed well off the beach. Therefore, the fish stayed off the beach. That meant great diamond jigging for weaks and small to medium blues at most of the rips for most of the summer and fall. Since there were no spearing inshore to speak of, there were few chances of weaks, bass, and blues wandering close to the beach and finding the spearing. Although there was some hope in September that large schools of bunker might turn the blues and bass onto a good fall feeding frenzy, a heavy concentration of bunker boats in late September and early October took the lions share of the bunker and there went the fishing. The bunker boats were aided and abetted by the calm and warm weather which made the job of spotting the schools from the air an easier job. This year, the Sound's bunker were literally vacuumed up! Legal or no, this will have to be changed in some way so that at least half the bunker are left. We've been over it and over it and the fact that recreational fishing is so many times more important to an area's economy than commercial activity has to mitigate for legislative reform. If we can't catch fish, then we don't spend money. That's something for all you bait and tackle dealers, motel owners, charter boat captains, gas stations, restaurants, diners, etc., to begin thinking about. The time is long overdue for all of you to lend your voices to ours and call for legislative reform on commercial fishing. Where are you people? Don't you care about your businesses?

So much for doom and gloom! There were some good times along the South Shore. In late spring and during the summer there were good numbers of weaks to be had on worms from the surf at Democrat Point. That's no surprise to anyone. What was a surprise is that this action, which had been steady for some years, didn't fall flat on its face!! There weren't fish every night, but there were a few flurries of fish on consecutive nights.

On the other side of the inlet, the Sore Thumb had its

The author's hours-to-point-fish ratio rose dramatically in 1980.

brief moment in September when good-sized weaks were taken regularly by those who know the Thumb. These fishermen used live snappers to take very big weaks. However, the Thumb is accessible to Babylon Town residents only and enforcement can be harsh at times. There were also occasional flurries of weaks, bass, and blues at the Thumb from late spring right through the fall, but there was no real pattern for the action and that made pinning the fish down very hard.

For the most part, the open beach between Fire Island Inlet and Jones Inlet was quiet, although, here again, there were occasional fish taken if you were there when the fish were. Jones Inlet was quite quiet for most of the season and the usual June action for big bass on bunker mackerel and eels just never got into gear. In the fall there were some flurries mainly near the bridges, but again, nothing that was sustained for long periods of time like the weakfish run that spanned most of July and part of August in 1977.

If Jones Inlet and Fire Island Inlet were sad stories, there were some brighter moments at Moriches and Shinnecock Inlets. This was especially true at Moriches where there were bluefish, mostly small and medium in size from late spring into early fall. Mostly the action wasn't furious, but those in the know were able to read the signs and cash in. Weaks and bass were occasional companions to the blues. At Shinnecock there was a good pick on medium to large bass in September. However, the word never got out until the action was over and so only the locals took advantage of it.

We kept hearing rumors from Breezy Point, but we never went there to check it out and the information we received was very thin. In any event, most of the action, as we understand it, was at the tip of the jetty, and for everyone except the skilled jetty jockey, the place is too far out of their territory.

In late September and October, there were weaks and big blues in Jamaica Bay. Most fishermen who worked the area snagged bunker from the passing schools and let them swim. On some nights the results were outstanding; while on other nights, the results were meager.

Staten Island surprised some folks, we think. For the past few years there had been good steady fishing for big weaks, big blues, and big bass. Again, most of the action in those years was on live bunker or fresh chunks, but from time to time, a run of fish would hit swimming plugs. One year in particular you couldn't buy a Danny plug on Staten Island because for three weeks big bass were eating them for snacks. This year that wasn't the case. There were small weaks, small blues, and small bass on and off on bait and artificials, but the big boys only blitzed on rare occasions.

Perhaps the steadiest action of the entire season on artificials was at Montauk. After many poor years there finally was a sustained run of fish. Unfortunately, this action was under the Light and many anglers disdain fishing from there—including Yours Truly. In late September, the sporadic action started, but then there was steady action for about five days in early October. These fish were mostly weaks, but from time to time, there were raids by big blues and some nice bass, too, especially later in the fall.

What does 1981 look like? Well, I can't be optimistic. The sand eels are on the decline. The spearing are non-existent. The mullet seems to be mostly a memory. The bunker get scoffed up by the bunker boats. This spring's heavy dragging in Long Island Sound should be even heavier in '81, so again, I can't be optimistic. The bass population is down, the big monster blues that we have been spoiled with in recent years are becoming fewer and fewer, and the weaks are declining. Now, I don't like to be so pessimistic, but this is how it shapes up. It means that we all have a lot of work ahead of us to fight commercial fishing and it means that Nature will have to turn on at least one of her cycles. Now that I have depressed you, here's some good news. When I make a prediction it usually flops—lays a giant egg! So get the gear ready for a great year!

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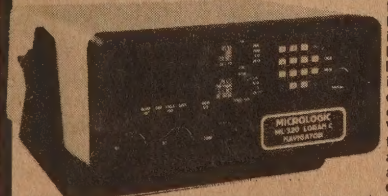

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Someone has said that two boys together at any one time should always be considered as one too many at any time. Now, there is a convoluted sentence if I ever saw one. But it seems to me that the spoil-sport who originally voiced this witless pearl of wisdom had never fished a day in his life, nor did he fully understand the inherent clannishness of fishermen. A pox on him! And all who subscribe. For tell me, please, where would be

BLACKFISHING

fishermen be if to become followers of old Ike Walton meant also to cloak ourselves with the raiment of a hermit?

Few of us, I'm sure, could truly enjoy our sport without good friends to share our trials, tribulations, and those rare but glorious days when things do go according to expectations. And most treasured of all is that incomparable pleasure which always exists when fishing with buddies of long-standing. We may argue and bicker between ourselves, we may on occasion feel slighted, but as surely as the needle swings to the pole, we remain friends—even those who have passed on to better fishing will forever hold a warm spot in our hearts.

Along about now, I'm sure many of you are saying: "Hey! What's with this guy! I thought this was going to be a story about old-time blackfishing!" And so it shall be, providing this old gray head is allowed time to regain a much needed second wind. But in order to tell you about the best blackfishing day I've ever had, I must first set the stage with two boyhood chums who were directly involved; chums who, quite possibly, would have remained strangers had our parents believed in that asinine "pearl of wisdom" quoted above.

The events that happened took place on November 16, 1931—and you must admit that is certainly going back a long way. I was a mere seventeen then, but even so managed to garner several fishing buddies. There was Artie Leidecker with whom I shared that memorable day (and with whom I still fish), and Jimmy Starr, whose father was the neighborhood printer. While Artie and I had been fishing together for some time, Jimmy only occasionally joined us, having no need to really as his father owned a pretty nice twenty-eight footer which he kept docked in Canarsie.

And there was Ronald Casper who lived on the top floor of our Brooklyn tenement. But Ronald Casper wasn't a kid. In fact, he was a Spanish-American War veteran and somewhere in his fifties at the time. But best of all from my viewpoint, Mr. Casper was also a retired charter boat skipper. Sad to say, this early retirement seemed permanent and was due solely to ill health, although when he felt up to it, Mr. Casper did make occasional party boat trips with long-time buddies. He was also, as you can well imagine, one of the best fishermen I've ever known.

Needless to say, I was much interested in Mr. Casper's fishing adventures. And because of this intense interest, often surprised when Mr. Casper's daughter or son-in-law failed to give me the old heave-ho when I shamelessly and unwittingly intruded upon their privacy in order to discuss fishing with what must certainly be considered a captive audience. I guess you might say Mr. Casper and I got along pretty well, for we killed two birds with the proverbial stone. Our discussions offered him much needed relief from boredom and in return, I received desperately needed fishing information.

To show my gratitude (which I must admit now was probably a selfish method used solely as an excuse to visit Mr. Casper), I tried always to set aside some part of my party boat catches for his small family. Ling and whiting in springtime; porgies, sea bass, and fluke in summer; blackfish in fall, and cod in winter—all of which you may be sure were most welcome during those hectic Depression-ridden days. It was because of this "sharing of the wealth" that that memorable blackfishing day came about.

Several weeks before I had brought a half-dozen or so nice blackfish up to Mr. Casper's apartment. These fish weren't large—just average-sized Seabright blacks about two to three pounds each. While I was busy filleting them on the metal covering of the old-fashioned kitchen washtubs, Mr. Casper sat close by, making comments here and there.

"Pretty nice fish, Marty," Mr. Casper said at one point. With that he remained quiet for several seconds, and then added "...but I know where there are blackfish so big, you'd be ashamed to bring these home."

Now, Mr. Casper had often held me spellbound with stories of big cod and fluke his charters used to catch, but never a word had he ever mentioned about blackfish. You can bet I was all ears and wanted to know more about it.

"Well," Mr. Casper said, "there's a piece of wreckage off the Highlands, just north of Seabright, that produces blackfish so large, they scare you."

I had never heard blackfish described in those exact terms, but that didn't bother me. I was willing to be scared if he was willing to tell me about it. And he did.

About fifteen years before on a scorching August day, Mr. Casper said, he had a fluke charter out. They were drifting the inshore grounds between the Highlands and Seabright when two striper-trolling dories collided and were set ablaze. Mr. Casper was close enough to run his boat to the blazing scene and pull the fishermen from the water. Of course, the two dories went down. Mr. Casper, with quick presence of mind took shore ranges and so far as he knew, he was the only one who knew the exact location.

"I let the wreckage rest for a couple of years, building up growth, and so forth," Mr. Casper said in conclusion. "And, Marty, the first fall season I fished it, my charters caught the largest kind of blackfish—some twelve to fourteen pounds, and plentiful. It was that way every fall for all my charters; that spot never failed to produce monsters...and I guess it still does."

Well...the first thing I did after finishing the fillet job was to scoot over to Artie's home, only two tenements down the street. I told him Mr. Casper's story. "If we had a boat," I said, "I think Mr. Casper would show us that spot. He tells me lately he's been feeling fair to middling. I'll bet he'd do it."

Artie was as excited about the idea as I was. "Jimmy Starr," he suddenly said. "Jimmy Starr. His father's boat. Do you suppose maybe if Mr. Casper came along, Mr. Starr would take us out?"

There was only one thing to do. Ask. We didn't let any grass grow under our feet. Strike while the iron's hot, and all that. And we struck. I guess we overwhelmed Mr. Starr with our promise of good blackfishing. He immediately agreed. If Mr. Casper would go along and act as our guide, He'd give it a try.

Back to Mr. Casper I went. By now I felt like the Olympic torch bearer. "Sure, Marty, sure," Mr. Casper said, that peculiar gleam in his eyes which all dedicated fishermen recognize and possess. "...if I feel up to it, I'll let you know."

We left it at that. But I didn't forget, not by a long shot, and everyday I expected to hear from Mr. Casper. Nearly two weeks went by, and then one afternoon Mr. Casper's daughter spotted me on the street. "Dad says he wants to see you when you get a minute."

And that is how we came to make that trip.

A tentative date for November 16 was made, with the understanding that if the weather held we would go on that day. The good weather continued and early that morning of the sixteenth, the five of us were aboard Mr. Starr's boat, pushing through the calm waters of Jamaica Bay, heading for the Roxbury bait man at Louie's Pier. Only the largest green crabs would do for these monster blackfish, Mr. Casper said, and we took aboard a

half-bushel. (Two dollars for a full bushel!)

Construction work was then in progress on the Rockaway Point jetty, having started that summer if I remember correctly, and as we got beyond that into the open sea and approached the bell buoy, we found ideal conditions. The sun was brilliant and no sea at all to speak of, with only an occasional whitecap here and there, goaded on by a light northwest breeze.

Our rigs contained but one bottom hook—a tarred snell #2 Virginia, which was larger by far than any of that type I had ever used before. "How big are those fish, anyway?" Artie asked me as we followed instructions and placed our hooks four inches above an eight-ounce bank sinker. "Look at the size of these hooks!" I wondered about that myself, but I consoled my uncertainty with the thought that Mr. Casper knew what he was doing.

We sailed along the shore line of Sandy Hook, skirted the offshore pound nets, those same pound nets which used to produce stupendous doormat fluke fishing in September, and soon arrived in the vicinity of the wreckage. Mr. Casper then took over the controls, while Mr. Starr went to the bow to handle the anchor. Jimmy and Artie stood in the stern, while I busied myself selecting the largest green crab I could find in the bait tub. We had been advised not to remove the top shell, claws or legs, but to fish the bait in its natural form if we wanted the best results. That was good enough for me, although it did make for a monstrously-large bait.

I guess it took a good ten minutes (agonizing for us) to get the boat exactly where it was wanted because, as Mr. Casper said, the wreckage was not too big and it was important to do it right. I could tell from the way the boat was handled that my friend had indeed been an excellent charter boat skipper. And as I watched him go through all the necessary requirements to put our boat precisely where he wanted it, he gave no inkling of the ill man I knew him to be.

"All right, boys," he said, as he shut down the engine. "This is it. Let's see what happens."

I had brought along my converted hickory pool cue rod which I had, until then, used exclusively for codfishing, and of course, my rugged sidewinder. That outfit had decked many an outsized cod for me; now I was anxious to see what it would do with those hoped-for monster blackfish.

We sent our rigs through thirty to thirty-five feet of crystal-clear water and waited. It was Jimmy Starr who tied into the first fish. And I'll say right now, I don't know how big that fish was because it fouled his rigging in the wreckage and had to be broken off. But it left him breathless. "Jeeze," he said. "It felt like a horse."

Then Mr. Casper hooked into one, but with the fish only halfway up, Mr. Starr had to take over and winch it to the surface. That fish was just too much for Mr. Casper to handle in his condition. Artie slipped a net under the struggling fish and dumped it on deck. Its estimated weight was eleven pounds.

Then Mr. Starr brought up one about the same size. Artie and I waited our turn. Then I felt it. A hesitant pick—then nothing. I waited. Again a pick, this time more pronounced, and I guess my heart was doing some pretty fancy thumping. Then came the expected solid yank—which seemed more like a mighty blow—and I reared back on the rod and it felt as though I'd driven my hook into a bull. That black's strength certainly seemed greater than mine and for a moment it was a toss-up as to who would give in first.

Maybe I was lucky—I don't know—but I got that fish clear of the wreck and began to reel it in. Every few feet it would stop me cold, boring downward, and I had all I could do to feed it enough line to relieve the strain on the tackle, yet not enough so that it could get back into the wreck. I finally got that monster to the surface, where Mr. Starr quickly placed a net around it and lifted it aboard. According to Mr. Casper, an easy twelve pounds. Phew! I was pooped. And maybe, as I had been warned, a little scared at what was down there.

And so it went throughout the morning. We continued to fish until our bait supply was gone. How many of those huge blackfish we caught I can no longer remember, but it must have been near forty. I am also not sure who caught the biggest fish, but someone had decked a black larger than my first one and I believe it was Artie. The smallest fish was perhaps five pounds. There were only a few of these and all were carefully unhooked and returned. I don't believe we kept any blackfish under six or seven pounds. It was the greatest blackfishing day I have ever experienced. And ever hope to.

I continued to visit Mr. Casper and bring him my party boat fish; but that following spring he passed away. His daughter gave me all his tackle, plus hooks, sinkers, etc., telling me her father had asked her to do so.

Over the years, Artie and I attempted to find that wreckage, but we never did; and I suppose now there isn't much, if anything, left of it. What there was about that wreckage that attracted such big blackfish, I'll never know, but whatever it was, my dream is to find another like it.

I think the chances are pretty slim.

The Old-Timer Letter Writing Contest winners for October and November were: **Samuel L. Weinstein, Queens Village, N.Y.** and **Greg Milman, Great Neck, N.Y.**

This is the final month for the contest, so get those letters in by the fifteenth—there's a nice Shakespeare spinning reel waiting for someone.

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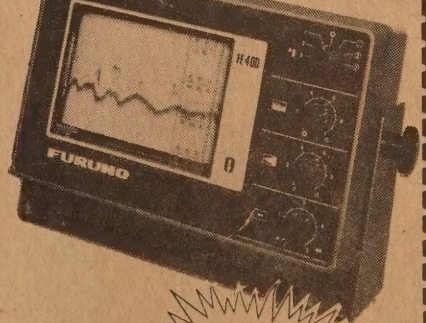

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Doc Merc Omchrysler

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Can you give me a couple of ideas on what makes gas mileage go down suddenly? My boat is a 20' Seacraft with a 115 h.p. Evinrude 1974. I've always kept a log of running time and fuel consumption since I've had the boat. Generally speaking, I run at 2300 RPM most of the time and could figure on using about six gallons of fuel per hour. It was down a bit from that last fall, so I had a complete tuneup—$238 worth—the works. It definitely helped. I was doing better this spring, but about three weeks ago it suddenly fell off by almost a third, or about thirty-five minutes to six gals. The motor still runs perfectly it seems. I checked the plugs myself and they looked perfect too. The engine has 1060 hours on it total, and ninety hours since the tuneup.

Ed Krisnack

There is no quick answer to your question as a change in fuel consumption could have one or more causes. However, you have quite a few hours on your engine so a compression check would be in order as you may have lost compression in a cylinder. Also check your RPM at full throttle to see if you are running up to or near peak. A spark plug check will not necessarily show that a cylinder is operating with a lower compression than the others. You didn't mention if you trailered your boat; but if left in the water, an obvious source of your trouble could be a fouled bottom. Of course, a fuel leak in the lines, tank, or at the engine is another place to look, but hardly probable as you would have noticed the odor. A major factor in fuel consumption is load. As good fishermen are notorious for accumulating each and every new item that comes along (and new friends), you might reflect back to see if you can recall big changes in gear or people aboard. Finally, your hull is six or seven years old now. Are you getting seepage in your bilge? We know that seems obvious, but a dry cockpit is not a guarantee of a dry bilge.

* * *

I have a 1976 Boston Whaler 19 Outrage which I want to mount a Penn downrigger on. Can you give me any advice on this? I know I can do the job myself alright, but a friend of mine had one on his boat and the thing tore loose, tearing up his gunwale a bit. Is my boat too small, do you think?

Ralph Cossing

We feel very safe in answering your question because we owned an identical hull which we equipped with dual downriggers. We mounted them on the gunwale adjacent to the console so that adjustments could be made without leaving the helm. The top of the Whaler's gunwale has a sort of raised section, so we mounted a nice teak block insert to build up the lower middle section. This insert spreads the loading forces. You should bolt through the glass, the teak and the downrigger brackets. Use a good bedding compound between each surface. The Whaler's gunwales are strong enough to handle the job as we had no problems after several seasons of hard usage. The real problem in adding equipment and fastenings on glass boats is the finding of suitable locations where a backing plate (the teak insert) can be used to reinforce the glass. Also, if soft woods or plywood is used as a backing plate, increase the size of the washers on your bolts: the larger, the better.

* * *

Just a quickie question—but it has been bothering me for quite awhile, as I've never learned to gauge how much fuel, in running time, there is in a carburetor. Is it necessary, or a good idea to disconnect the fuel line to the engine when coming into the dock so as to burn all the fuel up so that it doesn't lay in the carb until the next use?

Ray Gould.

Heck, no! Do not disconnect the fuel line before docking—that could cause a disaster. Keep Murphy's Law in mind: if anything can happen, it will...at the exact wrong time. You probably got the idea from watching "Pros," clammers and such, who run their rigs everyday of the year almost and have their timing down to a science. But even they run into a problem once in awhile. You can bet on the carburetor running dry just as you slam it in reverse to avoid collision or a person overboard in your way. Run the fuel out at the dock or the ramp.

* * *

I have a Mercury 650 with a three-bladed propeller which is nicked up on the edges. The nicks are about one-quarter to five-sixteenths of an inch deep; also it's a little beat on the outside edges of the blades. I am very short on bread as I was laid off and I only use the motor when I can get friends to share the fuel and ramp costs. Can I just file down the edges and hammer out those little bends? I have not had any problems: no vibrations or anything I could notice. Or should I leave it alone and use it as is?

Everett Knight

We recommend that you have your propeller reconditioned. The cost of an average recon job is about $25 and well worth the price. Many times the nicks and dings seem to go unnoticed, but they will certainly take their toll on engine performance, and that ends up meaning economy. At somewhere around $1.40 per gallon for fuel, the $25 in propeller money will be recovered quickly. Get your buddies to kick in their share if they want to continue to use your rig.

* * *

My 1968 85 h.p. Johnson has had its days now and I'm thinking about picking up a newer motor of similar horsepower over the winter. I cannot afford the couple of grand a new one costs now; so I have to go used. Have you any advice on what to look for on a used motor—I mean something other than it should look clean, etc., because my 85 really looks good for its age—but I know it needs a major overhaul.

Jay Ryan

Well, first of all—an engine looking clean is a good bet. Take the cover off your prospect, look for telltale signs of hard use and poor care: corrosion, taped or frayed wires, mis-matched bolts and screws, missing washers. A discolored engine block usually means overheating. Check serial numbers—make certain they exist. There are plenty of "hot" engines around and you don't want to help out a thief. On older OMC products, look to see if the cylinder head gaskets have been replaced—an indicator of motor servicing. Check the lower unit oil level. If it's milky or thick, beware. Note condition of prop and skeg for indications of stone-crushing tendencies of the owner(s). Best of all, if possible, test the engine on the boat for throttle response, excessive noise, vibration, how it runs at idle and if balky starting when cold. Also, determine if it tilts and swivels easily—not frozen in place. Usually, Mr. Ryan, go with your first impression, but take your time. There are plenty of used engines around and a reputable dealer may be your best friend in this case. He would do the necessary work before you buy it.

* * *

I have a trailer that is rusting very bad and would like to know if there is anything I can do short of sandblasting it. I wanted to do it myself and want to know if someone put out a product that can remove the rust down to the metal so I can repaint it. I would be very thankful for any

information you can give me. *W. Glast*

Sorry for the delay; from the postmarks your letter passed through a number of post offices before it arrived at our door.

We know of no product which will remove heavy rust from a boat trailer in such a manner that it would be worth the expense and effort. The real difficulty is that rust will be found in all the nooks and crannies of the angles of the trailer which are not accessible for treatment other than by complete dismantling. After that job, sandblasting may be practical, but for exteriors only. Square and tubular sections may have heavy, unseen oxidation at work inside which may be eating away quite rapidly if saltwater stays entrapped for a period after each use. For appearance sake and some protection, scale rust on flat and tubular accessible sections should be chipped and then sanded off, using a heavy duty drill (or disc sander) with the flexible aluminum oxide grinding discs. This would be followed by a metal prep such as used by auto body shops IMMEDIATELY before a primer paint coat. Corners and angles should also be chipped and scraped as clean as feasible. Rustoleum and other paint manufacturers have special products for dealing with metals from which rust scale has been removed, leaving rather clean metal except for the deeply pitted spots. These products should be used according to the directions supplied. There are also special products for priming and painting galvanized metal. Regarding the latter, many trailer owners change positions of the taillights and tie-downs, add new fittings, etc., which require new bolt holes being drilled. As it is rather impractical to hot dip the newly bored hole, it is essential to protect the new metal exposed and the surrounding area from moisture penetration under the galvanizing at the edges of the new holes. A daub of paint and silicone caulk will help. There are quite a number of products now on the market which are alleged to remove rust, but we have not found any that we could recommend on a large job such as a boat trailer. In fact, we have not found any that were really satisfactory for anything but light surface work, as chipping and sanding was still required. If anyone out there has found a rust remover that does a really satisfying job, share the wealth!

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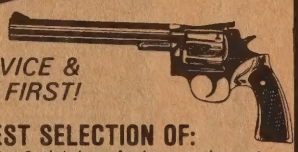

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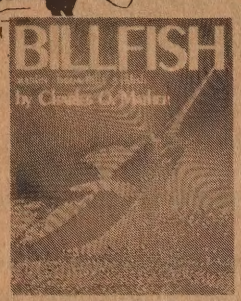

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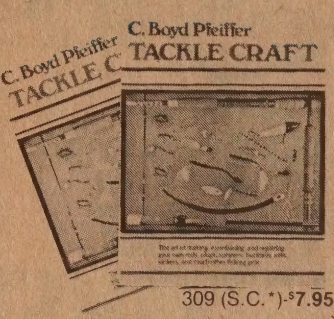

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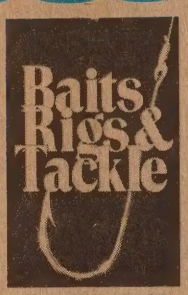

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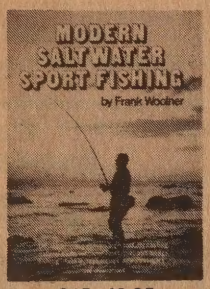

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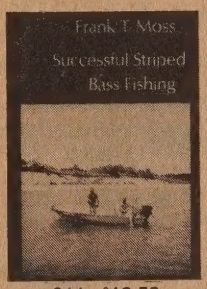

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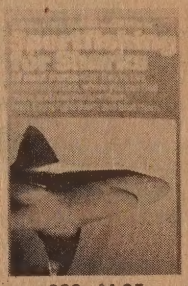

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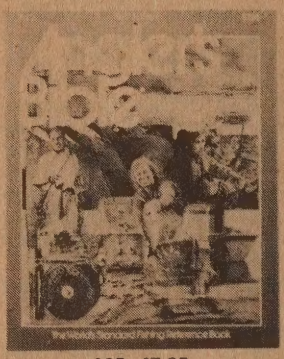

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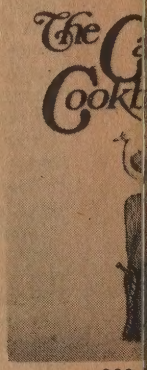

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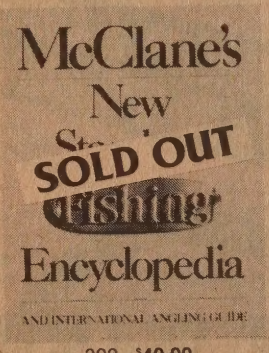

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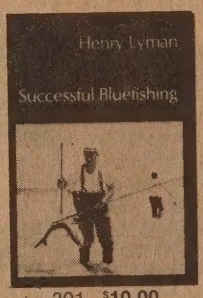

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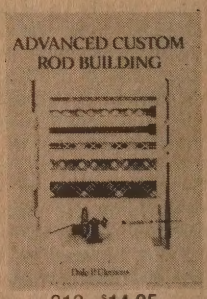

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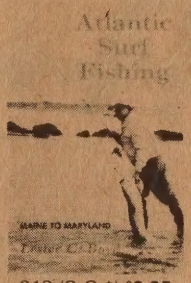

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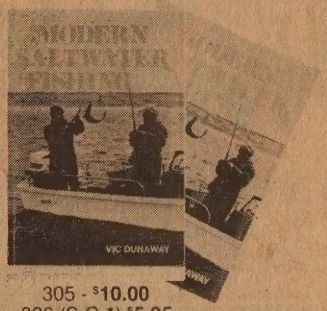

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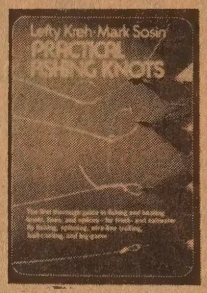

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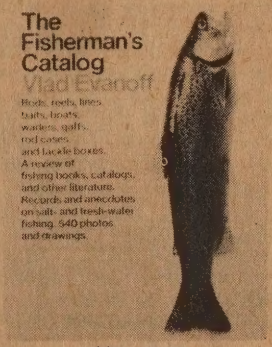
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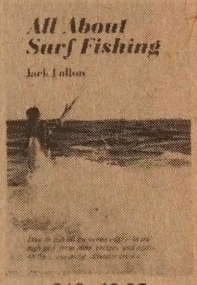

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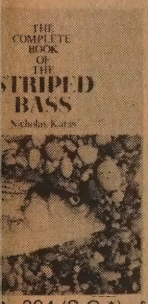

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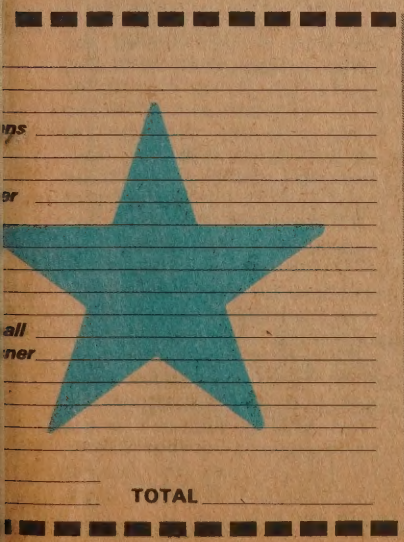

Fireside Reading

Part Three — by Fred Golofaro

With Thanksgiving 1980 now only a memory, Christmas is just a short cast away. Many have already begun counting down the shopping days left until Christmas; while some, fearing the drudgery of crowded malls, long lines, and high prices will delay their shopping until the waning moments of Christmas Eve.

Whichever category you find yourself in, there is sure to be a fisherman on your shopping list. If he or she already has more rods, reels, and plugs than the local tackle shop and gift buying becomes a mind boggling array of "Should I?" or "Shouldn't I's," then books are the perfect answer. Several of the books covered in this, the third segment of "Fireside Reading," would make handsome additions to any angler's library and cure your shopping woes at the same time.

TACKLE CRAFT, by C. Boyd Pfeiffer, is the perfect book for gift giving. Within the book's 338 pp., the author makes use of over 400 photos as he provides concise, step-by-step instructions for making your own fly, spinning, bait-casting, and big game rods. What makes this work so special is the attention given to subjects such as plug making, molding your own leadhead jigs, tin squids, and soft plastic lures; and making spoons and spinners. Terminal tackle is thoroughly covered as are topics such as painting lures and the care and repair of your tackle, including how to mend broken glass and bamboo rods. I found the chapter covering the making of miscellaneous items like gaffs, sand spikes, and rod racks especially helpful. Carrying a cover price of $9.95, the book will pay for itself a hundred times over and at the same time provide hour after hour of satisfaction as you spend long winter nights making your own equipment. Published by Crown Publishers, the book is also available in soft cover.

Compiled by Vlad Evanoff, **THE FISHERMAN'S CATALOG** is a complete source of information for nearly everything pertaining to fishing. Mr. Evanoff provides a listing and review of rods, reels, lines, lures, fishing boats, outboard motors, electronics, books, and catalogs. Included are photos or illustrations of the product, description of the product, the name of the firm making or selling it, and the address you can write to for their catalog or more

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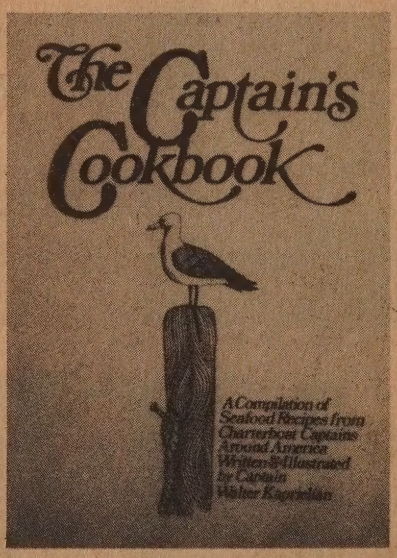
The Captain's Cookbook
A Compilation of Seafood Recipes from Charterboat Captains Around America
Written & Illustrated by Captain Walter Kaprielian

information on the item. Throughout the 401 p. soft cover book are short pieces on fishing tips, oddities, and feats, along with some very useful "how-to" articles. These segments provide interesting and helpful reading and make the reader forget that he or she is looking at a catalog. This handy reference guide is published by Double-Dolphin and retails for $6.95.

When it comes to gift giving, Captain Walter Kaprielian's **THE CAPTAIN'S COOKBOOK** is an ideal gift. Unique in style and filled with cheerful illustrations, the 212 p. book is a compilation of favorite recipes contributed by charter and private boat captains and mates from ports all over the United States, the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, and Jamaica. Missing is the fancy terminology of many cookbooks. Instead, Captain Walter presents all of these mouth watering recipes with simple, easy to follow instructions and step-by-step illustrations. Of special interest are the sections on procuring and preparing seafood found in the opening pages of the book. To try and select a few favorites from within the pages of this attractively bound book would be an injustice. One need only skim through the pages to understand why. Published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, **THE CAPTAIN'S COOKBOOK** sells for $9.95.

MODERN SALTWATER FISHING, by expert angler Vic Dunaway, is a complete "manual of instruction" for both the novice and experienced saltwater fisherman. Through the author's years of experience, he provides the essential details required to become a more complete angler. Thoroughly covered are topics such as tackle selection, fighting and landing saltwater fish, rigging and knot tying, fishing systems and techniques and a chapter on specialties such as stalking the flats, deep jigging, wreck fishing and fly fishing. Liberally illustrated and well organized, the book carries a cover price of $10. Two hundred eighty-six pages long, it is published by Winchester Press.

SUCCESSFUL BLUEFISHING, by Henry Lyman, deals solely with this favorite game fish. The author shares a half century of experience within the pages of his book and covers all the basics, as well as some of the finer aspects of the game. The book contains sections on the life cycle of the fish, the history of the fishery and the best places to find the tenacious scrapper. No more thorough work has ever been done on the bluefish. So, whether you're thrilled by sight of a big blue crashing a surface plug in a formy surf or prefer to take him from the deck of party or charter boat, **SUCCESSFUL BLUEFISHING** should be required reading. Included in the book's 112 pp. are many fine photos. Published by International Marine Publishing Company, this hard cover book retails for $10.

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ERSATZ COD

by Henry Schaefer

To steal a joke from Rodney Dangerfield, the ling is so ugly, underneath the word ugly in the dictionary is a picture of the fish.

This soft-fleshed, potbellied, bewhiskered, sad-eyed denizen of the deep wears a coat of two colors: spoiled mustard on top and sickening yellowish-white on the bottom. There are uglier fish, but not many, and because the ling is so homely many people believe that it cannot possibly be good to eat.

However, this member of the hake family, and distantly related to the codfish, is an excellent food fish although only anglers have the ability to take the fullest advantage of this fact. As a market fish, the red hake has never amounted to much in the United States, mainly because of its looks and soft flesh.

A beam trawler can dump fluke, porgies and sea bass into the hold, and they'll reach the fish stalls in fairly presentable condition; but ling are ugly to start with and don't take kindly to dumping into big wooden boxes. The species that the ling is most often associated with is the northern whiting or silver hake, which is a preferred market fish mainly because it looks better, is firmer, and doesn't have an oversize soft belly.

Anglers who take the trouble to avoid crushing a big catch of ling and process them as soon as conveniently possible, have excellent table food. The flesh is flaky, mild and the taste is very close to that of codfish. The ling might not be quite as good as haddock or cod, but quite similar.

A close relative of the red hake and equally as ugly, is the white hake which grows much larger and which also is a good substitute for codfish. However, in waters off the Jersey shore, the white hake is not plentiful.

So, for most of us who like codfish and don't get as many as we used to, the humble red hake or ling will have to do as a substitute. Before we go on, it should be pointed out that not all people think ling are ugly. The Russians, Poles and East Germans think they are beautiful, and before the days of the 200-Mile Limit caught and transported back to Europe huge tonnages of red hake to the extent that this once super-abundant species actually became very scarce. The red hake is on the comeback trail for which cod and ling fanciers are happy.

The ling doesn't look like a fighter and it isn't. When hooked, it may decide to swim away and do a bit of tugging, but then often decides on another maneuver, wrapping itself up

Fishermen along the rail of the Dauntless out of Point Pleasant Beach fishing for ling in the Mud Hole.

in the snell and line to be dragged to the surface tail up. This stunt, wrapping itself up in the line, is also highly regarded by eels, ocean pout, dogfish and other sharks. It's a defensive maneuver that never seems to accomplish anything, but ling and the others keep on doing it.

Of all the fish in the ocean none is easier to catch than the ling and the range of baits is wide. The food I've most often found inside ling are small crabs and other crustaceans, including lobsters. Because of this prefered diet of shellfish, the ling, in my opinion, tastes a mite better than the primarily fish eating whiting—but just a mite.

I think they are both excellent.

Their diet affects the flavor of all fish, including fluke, which taste quite different after having dined almost exclusively on shrimp in the estuaries for a month or more. They taste different from the big ocean fish living on a variety of fishes.

One of the beautiful things about ling is that they are present the year-round, in the two hundred and more foot depths of the Mud Hole in the summer, and within pier and jetty casting distance in the early spring and late fall. During the dead of winter, they will be off in deep water again, but just about always within reach of the party boats.

Year-round, most people who fish aboard the deep sea fishing boats, catch more ling than anything else and while a lot of them aren't happy with their catches you don't see as many throwing them back overboard as they used to do. There was a time when most of the ling remained aboard only the length of time it took to unhook them and toss them back. It was a shameful waste of good food, especially when the fishing was done in deep water. Because of over-inflated air bladders, ling that are brought up fast from the deep cannot dive back to the bottom, but just flop around on the surface for a short while before dying.

The traditional rig on the party boats is the hi-lo—two hooks on short snells. One is tied either directly to the eye of the sinker or just above, and the second just high enough to clear the first. The low hook does most of the work. These are strictly bottom fish that grope in the sand or mud for crabs and stuff, and take just about any bait that they can swallow. Skimmer clam is the traditional bait, but just as good is crab, squid, or fish.

Since there is always the chance of hooking a blackfish (tautog), I prefer to use a #6 Virginia hook on the bottom and frequently tie two hooks to one short leader directly to the sinker. As a variation, you can tie two hooks on two short snells to either side of the sinker eye. If you use stiff forty pound test mono, the hooks will not tangle, but will fish in spreader fashion. If ling only are the target, you can forget about that high hook. If there are sea bass or possible small pollack or codfish, it is a good idea to run a high hook as well. Deep sea fishing has always been fascinating to me because you are never certain what you might hook next. It might be a four foot long angler weighing fifty pounds, and it might be a twenty pound codfish.

A catch of ling and whiting taken from a small boat in shallow water in the fall.

Most party boat anglers use thirty pound test monofilament lines which are strong enough to salvage snagged hooks and sinkers much of the time. If you don't like blackfish hooks, sizes 1 and 1/0 Sproat will do the job. Larger hooks offer no advantage.

One way to clean ling is to use a shear to cut off the dorsal, caudal and anal fins and then scale. A dull knife is okay for scaling these fish. Then amputate the head and continue the cut to remove the belly and contents. The fillets may then be carved from the spine, but this is a bit trickier than with most other fish because of the odd shape of hake spines. Skillful fish handlers can remove fillets from both sides of ling and then remove the skin with no preliminary cleaning, but this is difficult for most people. Required are equal portions of skill, a knife and a sharpening stone.

An easy and delicious way to prepare ling is to cut the fish into chunks (like slicing pieces of baloney), dip the chunks in egg and cracker meal and then deep fry in oil or shortening until golden brown. The flesh comes away from the bone as easily as deep fried chicken. You may think it tastes as good as chicken, and maybe you'll like it better. I've never been able to make up my mind.

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THE CHESAPEAKE CAN IT SURVIVE?

Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the world, is slowly dying. This 10,000-year-old body of water, that was once the world's leading seafood producer, and also provided a nursery for the majority of the striped bass that inhabit the East Coast, is finally succumbing to pollution.

Since 1970, there has not been a dominant year hatch of stripers in the Chesapeake, which has caused the population to decline drastically during this period. There are several theories as to why; but none have been substantiated by scientific evidence. Until recently, some experts claimed that it was all just a cycle and would get better on its own, but they are now starting to change their minds. Others thought that the influx of bluefish had depredated the bass population to low levels which would rebound when the blues left. Again, there is absolutely no evidence to support this theory.

Pollution is the main enemy of the Chesapeake and evidence of this is everywhere we look. Altering the natural flow of the tributaries that feed the bay is a form of pollution. In order to maintain a sufficient dissolved oyxgen level, certain flow requirements must be met. If these flows are lowered, the available oxygen can decrease to a point that destroys all forms of marine life.

Hydro-electric dams that only allow water to flow when electrical demand is high, kill millions of fish each year. Siltation from construction sites that are poorly planned, bury aquatic grasses and cloud the water, preventing penetration of life-giving sunlight. Surface runoff from no-till farming, chlorinated salts used during snow removal, and heat from power plant discharges, destroy many of the delicate micro-organisms that are an important link in the food chain that feeds young fish. Industrial waste, one of the prime killers, finds its way into the tissues of every known form of aquatic life in the bay, which, in time, ends up in our bodies.

The striped bass, Maryland's State fish and an important coastal fish, is becoming an endangered species despite efforts by local groups to stem the drastic decline in population. The commercial and sports catch is lower than any time in our history and predictions are for a decrease for 1980. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, after conducting two-thirds of its annual seining survey, reports the hatch is well below that of last year's and prospects don't look good.

During the 1979 session of the Maryland General Assembly, several bills were introduced that would curtail much of the harvest of striped bass. These bills will in no way change the percentages, but they will increase the population in absolute numbers by allowing more fish to successfully reach the spawning grounds during the spring run.

Traditionally, this is when the highest mortality occurred among the spawning females. They would be become entangled in the large mesh gill nets set on or near the spawning grounds. The oversized fish would be released by the waterman, but many would die from shock soon after being returned to the water. Steps were taken to prevent this from re-occurring by decreasing the size of the mesh, which prevented the larger fish from becoming entangled. Areas of the upper bay are now off limits to gill nets during the summer months to protect the resident stocks, which consists mainly of males. These restrictions, along with others that were instituted, will afford some protection to the stripers, but still won't solve the problem of reproduction.

There are many factors that enter into the reproduction of striped bass, along with a variety of perils facing the fish during the early stages of life. In order for any species to reproduce, they must have clean, clear water that is relatively free of pollutants. Unfortunately, the Chesapeake does not meet this criteria, with the possible exception of some of the tributaries in the upper bay.

The grasses that were once so thick on the Susquehanna Flats are now just patches of millfoil that are few and far between. Immediately after spawning, the eggs must harden sufficiently to withstand the tumbling action that is caused by the currents, but not too hard or they will not hatch. Because of certain pollutants, this hardening is not taking place and the outer membrane is rupturing, destroying the embryo.

During a recent survey done by Stripers Unlimited, the chemical, Polychlorinated Byphenol (PCB) was found in striped bass that were purchased from a local fish market. The level varied from ten to twenty-eight parts per million, which is higher than local authorities expected. According to the study, it takes as little as seven ppm to cause embryotic defect which, in nature, is fatal. Trace amounts of DDT were also found, which has been outlawed for over twenty years. Bearing this in mind, is it any wonder that there is survival—let alone good hatches?

Once the fish hatches, and assuming that he survives the first few years, he now faces the danger of being involved in one of the massive fish kills that take place each year.

A prime example of this particular hazard that striped bass face was seen 1971. The first major fish kill occurred on May 9, when 1,000,000 fish were found dead below Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River. The cause was placed on low oxygen levels which were the result of no water flow from the hydro-electric facility there. Just one month later on Sunday, June 6th, another 2,000,000 fish were killed at the same location. The species included carp, catfish, eels, walleye, white perch, yellow perch, smallmouths, stripers and muskies. Again, the cause was listed as low oxygen. The dead fish were piled up all along the banks of the Susquehanna and the stench was overwhelming if you were anywhere near the river.

July brought new horrors when 2,000,000 fish were reported to be washing up on the beaches of St. Mary's County. Most of these were Atlantic menhaden, but a few other species were mixed in with them and the cause was listed as unknown. Within a few weeks, another kill took place in the vicinity of Bear Creek, and another 1,000,000 fish died.

The hot, humid days of August were upon us and as the temperatures increased, the fish kills did also. On August 20, a large fish kill took place in Bodkin's Creek. One individual lost 130 dozen crabs, while another lost 900 eels. Just five days later, another 2,000,000 fish were found dead in the Bear Creek area. The following day, a powder spill was reported in the same vicinity from some unknown source. Water samples taken from the bay did not reveal the nature of the contaminant or the effects on marine life. It was later learned that the police had to wear gas masks in order to get into the area due to the toxic fumes. Two days later, on August 27, another kill took place in the same location. The reason given for this one was increased acidity and decreased oxygen saturation of the surrounding waters.

■ ■ ■

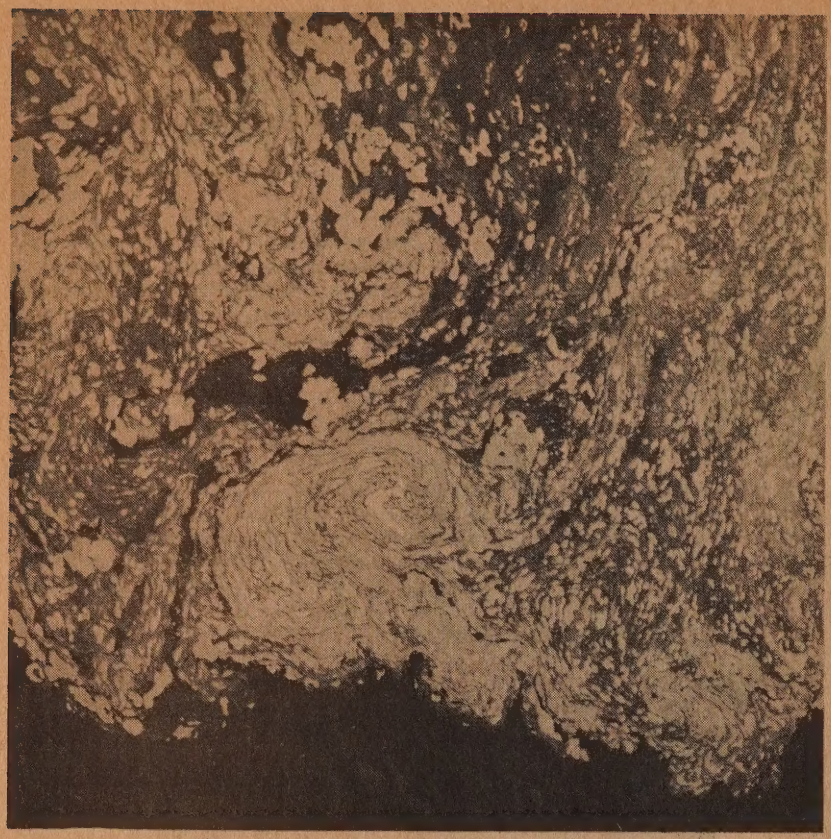
by Gary Diamond

During the early 60's small bass were caught by the dozens every day.

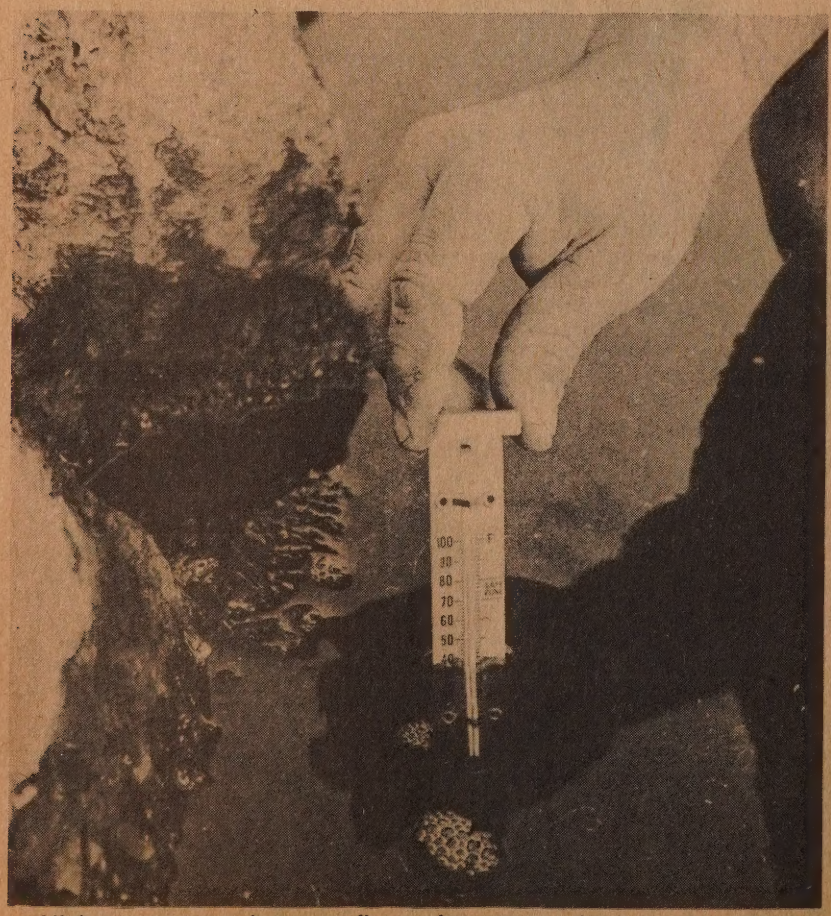
On August 30, an emergency public hearing was held at Sparrows Point High School and the decision was made to close the beaches in Baltimore County, just to be on the safe side. Those beaches have never been re-opened for swimming. Subsequent kills in this same area revealed that in the month of August alone, the losses were approximately 90,000,000 fish, a staggering number to say the least.

Needless to say, September, October, and November all had major fish kills in the area of Sparrows Point. More water samples were taken, and this time they revealed

(Continued on next page.)



Minor oil spills are becoming too common.



High temperatures, low water flows, often create a death trap for striped bass.

levels of cyanide that were considered lethal to marine life. The source of this pollutant was never published.

In 1974, just three years later, millions of fish were killed in Back River as a result of the sewage treatment plant discharging untreated waste directly into the river. Over one hundred tons of dead fish were gathered from the beaches by county employee's using shovels, 'dozers and dump trucks and were paid from a $6,000 grant earmarked for fish kill clean-ups.

In August of 1978, three separate fish kills took place on the Susquehanna River, below Conowingo Dam. All three occurred on Sundays, when the water flow had ceased and large populations of striped bass were known to be in the river. The department of Natural Resources investigated the report several days later and reported that 17,000 Atlantic menhaden were killed and that very few striped bass were affected.

Sport fishermen in this same area reported seeing dead striped bass, as well as catfish, perch, walleyes, smallmouth bass and eels. Now, considering that the day after the reported kill, the water flow released from Conowingo Dam was approximately 80,000 cubic feet per second and three days lapsed before a crew investigated the site, is there any wonder why there is such a discrepancy in the absolute amount or species involved?

The spring of 1978 brought increased pressure from sport and commercial fisherman upon the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to do something, before it was all too late. They responded by instituting a fishing ban in all designated spawning areas that would be in effect until June 1, when most of the main run is over. This, of course, saved a few fish from fishing pressure, but did not attack the basic problem: pollution. At this time, the DNR also agreed to establish a committee comprised of all user groups to set new regulations controlling the harvest of striped bass.

The group immediately set upon the task of determining major sources of pollution of all kinds and put forth a series of recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly by the Department. The second and toughest job was to then curtail the harvest by limiting their own fishing activities—both commercial and sport. This, also, would be submitted to the legislators by the DNR. The third, and probably most important piece of work to be performed, was to establish a research facility that could analyze some of the specific problems in reproduction.

The site chosen was an abandoned largemouth bass hatchery located in Elkton, Maryland. The rearing ponds were overgrown with multiflora rose and scrub trees that could only be removed with hand tools and chain saws. Most of the work was done by Maryland watermen who donated

their time and back-breaking labor to transform this tangle of undergrowth into a functional hatchery under the most adverse conditions.

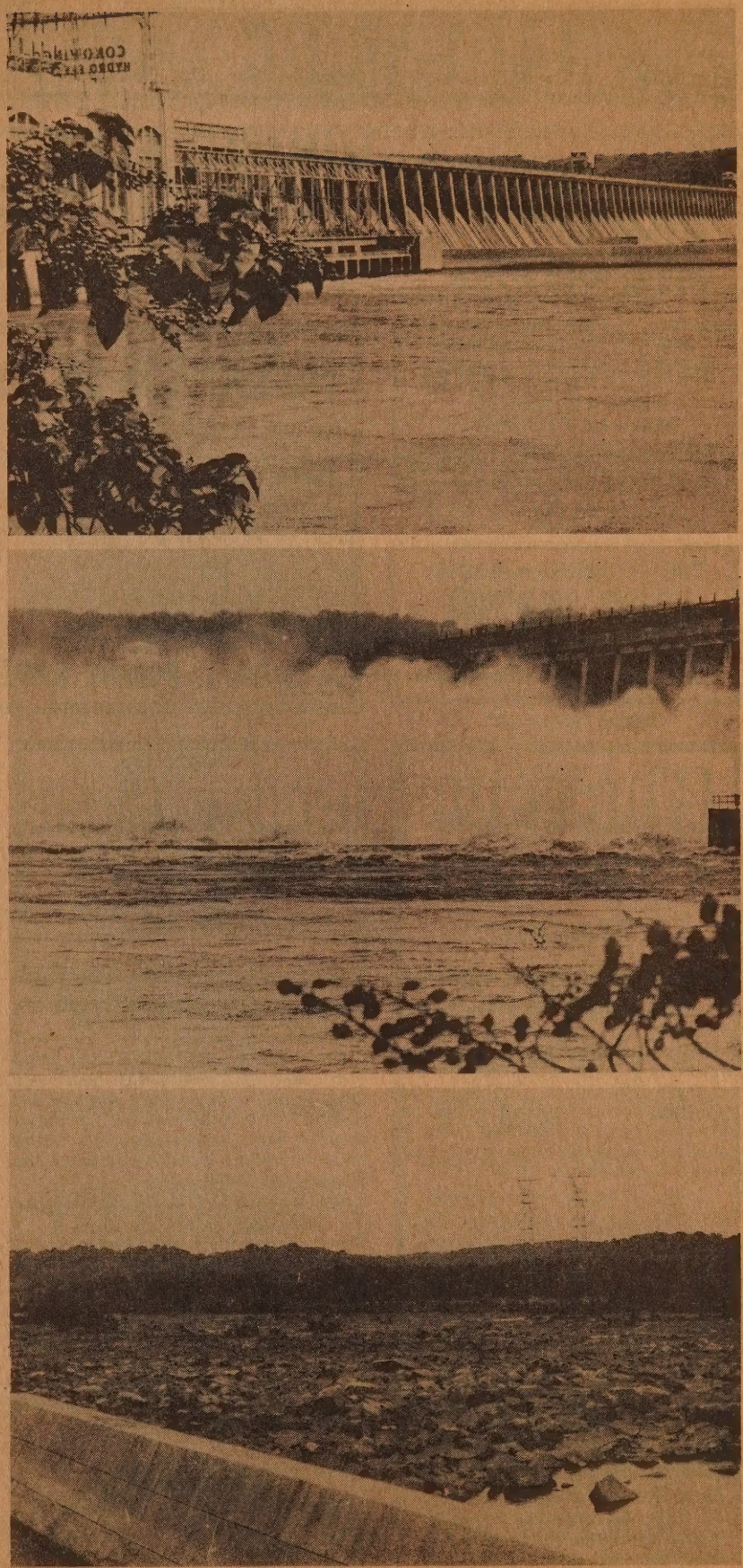
The first attempt to hatch stripers was met with problems they didn't expect to encounter, but approximately 50,000 fish hatched and were subsequently released into the Elk River that fall. This year has been considerably more successful and about 1,000,000 striped bass fingerlings that are from four to eight inches long are swarming in the ponds. These fish are not like hatchery raised trout that are fed high protein pellets until they are stocked. They are wild fish, just as if they had hatched in the Chesapeake, but they have no predators in the ponds other than their own brothers and sisters.

A second hatchery facility is now under construction at the University of Maryland's Horn Point Oyster Laboratory. Funds have been appropriated from the General Assembly to install twenty, one-acre rearing ponds as well as a complete laboratory that has the capability of doing in-depth studies during the early stages of life. This particular hatchery will have the capability of hatching 120,000,000 striped bass fry, marking them to study migration patterns and raising several million to fingerling size before being released. By doing this, several objectives can be accomplished.

Chemical toxins can now be readily identified and isolated to determine what effects they have on all stages of life. Migratory routes and age distribution can be observed, while also taking a good look at population dynamics. This will tell scientists exactly how many fish of a certain age group are in a specific area at any given time. Another species will also be examined during these studies: the hybrid white bass.

Although this particular fish is a sterile hybrid, it schools up with striped bass in brackish waters and has an extremely high growth rate. Being non-migratory in nature, it will remain in the upper bay above the salt wedge, providing fantastic sport for local anglers while revealing information for biologists pertaining to population density. By knowing exactly how many hybrids were released in a certain area, the ratio of striped bass to white bass can then be calculated to determine just how many fish are in this particular location.

The by-product of performing all of this research will, of course, add millions of striped bass to the fishery each year, but this alone will not solve the main problem: pollution. This can only be done by instituting and enforcing strict water quality laws, which in time can only have a positive effect on all species of marine life. Accomplishing this will be difficult, to say the least, but it can be done if enough concerned individuals or groups put forth an all-out effort to preserve their sport.



During normal operation (top) Conowingo Dam looks like any hydro-electric plant. But spring rains (center) and water shutoff (bottom) can change the situation in hours.

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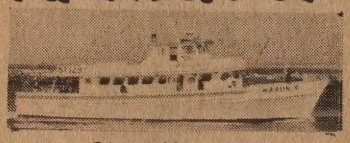

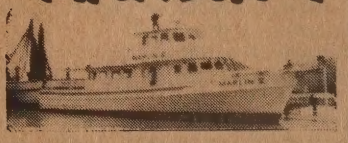

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MONTAUK ★ BEST BET ★ BLACKS

Captain Richie Rade of the **Marlin Fleet** said that Southwest Ledge at Block Island continues to produce a mixture of big blackfish, medium size cod and a few pollack. Codfishing has been erratic, with good action one day and slow fishing the next, but as water temperatures drop, the picture should improve.

Doug Pollack, Charles Godfrey, Al Ellis, Sr. and Jr., and Ken Kraeuter took these 35 big blackfish on green crabs at Southwest Ledge on the charter boat "Montauk." Photo by Montauk Marine Basin.

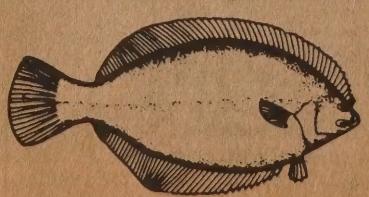
SOUTH FORK ★ BEST BET ★ COD

SHINNECOCK

From **Speck's Bait and Tackle Shop** Thom said that things have been very quiet locally with very few anglers out fishing. The only action he could confirm was of some flounder being taken on worms from the banks of the Shinnecock Canal.

MORICHES BAY

Bill at **East Moriches Bait and Tackle** relayed word that the private boat Skoal III put away cod of 40 and 17 lbs. on Thanksgiving day fishing in 85' of water south of the inlet. Boatmen still taking some nice flounder at buoys 27, 29, 36 and 44 on worms. Casters pick away from the banks of the Quogue Canal.



GREAT SOUTH BAY ★ BEST BET ★ BLACKS

CAPTREE

Capt George Tweedy of the **Capt Scotty** reports that his customers had 9 cod on Tuesday and 24 cod on Sunday. Ten of Sunday's fish ran from 25 to 35 lbs., with the rest going 3 to 5 lbs. All fishing was on open bottom with claim bait and the skipper says the catch was evenly distributed among the passengers with most people getting 1 or 2 fish. A very definitely productive cod season is under way.

Capt Speedy Hubert of the **Speedy Fleet** tells us that on Sunday's trip 25 cod were decked most being 7 to 8 lb. fish with the pool fish going 36 lbs. The next two runner-ups were two 28 lb. cod. Working backwards, Saturday's trip put 30 codfish in the boat, four of them hangers from 25 to 35 lbs. and the balance averaging in the 8 to 15 lb. range. Wednesday's trip saw 24 cod hooked and landed. Speedy says he's fishing open bottom and his trips are very consistent, in fact the most consistent catches in the last several years. Fishing is being done south SE of Fire Island Inlet in 100' of water. Some ling and whiting

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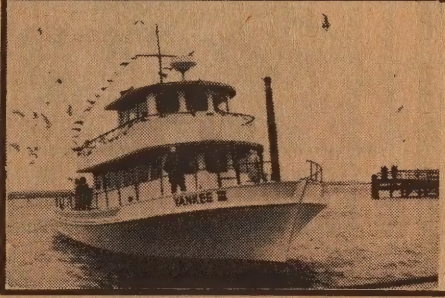

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John Dojahn and Al Lees with some of the 50 blues taken at Cartwright aboard the "Marlin V." Many of the fish were 18 and 19 lbers.

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BELLMORE

Scott at **Merrick Tackle** says that in general he continues to hear about catches of cod on various private and open boats and charter boats, more than he has heard of in the last few years. Thanksgiving morning, Scott and father, Roy, of **Merrick Tackle** engaged in a long awaited flounder fish-off with your reporter. Due to the unfortunate outcome of the fish-off, I cannot state that I emerged victorious. It all goes to further prove that there is no accounting for the distribution of pure luck in this life.

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These makos of 125 and 255 lbs. were landed by a party headed by Mike Miller. The group fished aboard the Captree charter boat, "Sea Ranger."

WEST END SOUTH SHORE

★ BEST BET ★

COD

FREEPORT

The **Starstream II** informs us that Sunday's codfishing trip resulted in 25 cod caught up to 20 lbs. Fish averaged 8 lbs. and this was all on open bottom. A few ling and whiting were also caught. On Wednesday's trip 10 codfish came over the rail, going up to 30 lbs. Action is just 1½ hours from the dock.

The **Capt Al** that Saturday's codfishing saw the best so far this year. Working just an hour from the Inlet in 70' of water, 38 men ended up with 48 cod. Russ Weber of Dumont NJ bagged a 38 pounder. Ridgewood angler Bill Holborn was high hook with 7 cod. In Friday's big wind, 7 men ended up with 40 cod. The catch of Thanksgiving was fair. Crowds are relatively small and the skipper says there are enough fish to go around so that very few customers get skunked. Al says there are a lot of fish around and they had nice picking Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

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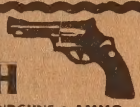
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are mixed in and there are very few doggies to steal the bait.

Capt Charlie Kennedy of the **Capt Bob Joseph** fished open bottom on Sunday and 24 men took 26 cod from 8 to 35 lbs. This was all on clam fishing south of the Inlet in 112' to 115' of water. The pool went to Robert Pace of Lake Ronkonkoma with a 35 pounder. Charlie said that all of the boats caught. This is an excellent sign and the season continues to improve o a daily basis. Consistency of the cod fish catches seems to be the by-word. The 200 Mile Limit seems to be finally boosting the stock of cod to a reasonable degree and things can only get better. Charlie says there are different schools moving around of fish 8 to 10 lbs. and fish 25 to 35 lbs. Customers are also picking a few whiting and ling.

Capt Bob Patafio of the charterboat **Yankee III** reports that his cod trip over open bottom Saturday and Sunday saw very good catches of cod. Despite very rough seas, customers took a substantial number of fish. High hook was 3 cod on Saturday. Saturday's pool went to Pete Birant of Tide Way Anglers, with a 30 lb. cod. Most of Saturday's fish ran from 15 to 30 lbs. Sunday's pool was a 20 lb. cod. Most of the fish Sunday were in the 10 lb. class. Fish were caught in a large area which is an excellent sign for a good productive codfish season.

Bobby reported from the **Captree Bait Station** that a few flounder are being picked from the overlook pier, while the Jones Beach Piers continue to enjoy good action with nice sized flounder on worms and clams.

BABYLON

Ralph from **Augie's Tackle Shop** reported that the Happy Hooker, skippered by Phil Fraccalaveri, put 12 cod up to 40 lbs. into the cockpit on Thanksgiving Day. They reportedly fished in 85' of water. Some nice sized flounder in the 1 lb. class continue to be taken in the pocket behind the Sore Thumb.

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Two of eight bass, including four over 30 lbs., are displayed by members of a group headed by Tim Lyons. Fishing was done aboard the "Adios" out of Montauk.

The action is steadily improving and it's definitely worthwhile during your codfishing this season due to the excellent availability of these delicious fish, which are averaging 6 to 12 lbs.

Capt Sy Karlin of the **Blue Fin Fleet** had the II out Saturday and Sunday and customers enjoyed a fair catch of cod up to 31 lbs. On Sunday Bill Wagner of Maspeth took weekend honors with the 31 pounder. Sy is fishing open bottom with clam. Despite 6' seas, cold and wind, fish were caught over the weekend. This seems to indicate a good number of fish around to chomp on a hook. There's also a smattering of ling, whiting and mackerel. Only 3 doggies for the 2 days fishing. On Thanksgiving Day, Capt Sy and 2 pals had a busman's holiday in a private boat. Sy happily said that he had 6 cod up to 32 lbs. He also advises that you must wait these fish out. Dead sticks are catching as many fish as rods being held. The skipper asked us to announce again that the boat will be running open cod reservation trip on Saturday December 20th.

The **Capt Lou Fleet** which is now sailing full day trips only, says that Monday's flounder fishing was good with high hook being 35 flounder for just a few passengers. Tuesday it was good also as was Wednesday, with Paul Watterau of Franklin Square bagging 38 flatties. The boat is working local flounder spots. Capt Mike says that he will be making some cod fish trips in the very near future, so watch his ad. Mike wishes his Jewish Customers a Happy Holiday.

David and Andrew Birnbaum display part of their catch of 25 blues, from 10 to 15 lbs., taken aboard the "Jib VII" out of Captree.

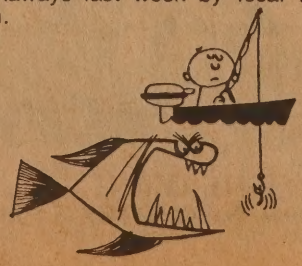
ATLANTIC BEACH

Al reported from his **Reynolds Reef Fishing Station** that there are still some flounder in the local creeks and near the cement block. Most of these fish are in the 1½ to 1¼ lb. range. No news on cod as no one was able to get offshore over the weekend.

This nice fluke was landed by Ann Manceri of Long Beach aboard the family boat, Volare III. Sbuscriber photo.

LONG BEACH

Bernie Haag reporting for the **Long Beach Sports Marina** described the flounder fishing near the Cedarhurst Yacht Club as "pretty decent." Peter Farley and John Menendez of Queens took 36 flatties up to 2 lbs. on the weekend using worms and mussel chum. Most boats have been averaging around 15 flatties. Bernie attributed Pete and John's better than average catch to heavy chumming. Still a few school bass trolled off the Rockaways last week by local boatmen.



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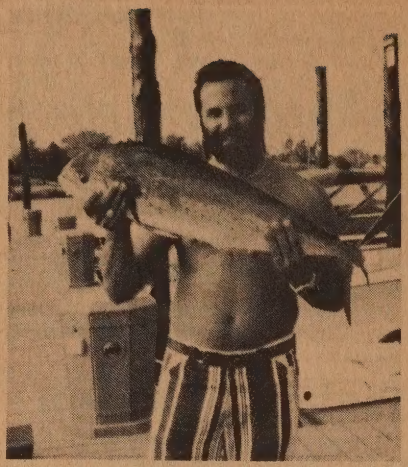

Ed Kovesdy trolled this nice dolphin S. of the Cholera aboard his boat, Little Dipper. Subscriber photo.

NORTH SHORE MID-ISLAND

★ BEST BET ★
BLACKS

HUNTINGTON

Bill reported from **Ronnie's Bait and Tackle** that a few school bass were still being taken last week at buoy 11B. Ronnie was busy butchering deer when we called. Any lucky deer hunter looking for someone to do the dirty work can give Ronnie a call at 549-9410.

Capt Don of the **Ever Ready** called to tell of an excellent weekend with Sunday's outstanding catch made by James Del Guidice of Dallas Texas. Tex took the pool with a 1 lb. 3 oz. flounder and an additional 39 flounders. His son followed closely behind with 38 flatties. Regular Delores Schmidt of Eaton's Neck and Mike Moran of Kings Park tied with 41 flounder each. The boat will be sailing their regular schedule from 8 a.m. to 4p.m. for flounders only.

Dolores Schmitt displays a brace of nice flounder taken at Eatons Neck aboard the open boat "Ever Ready."

NORTH SHORE WEST END

★ BEST BET ★
BLACKS

CITY ISLAND

From **City Island Bait and Tackle**, Greg spoke of some nice flounder being taken at Sands Point on sand worms. A few flatties also being taken in the vicinity of Hart's Island. Some of the locals have been running up to the Hudson and doing well on school bass with bucktails.

Jesus, Hector, "P.R.", and Wally with 13 bass up to 32 lbs. taken aboard the "Windy" on trolled Danny plugs.

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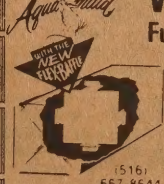
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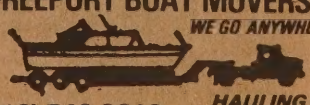
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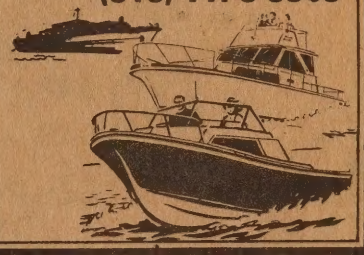

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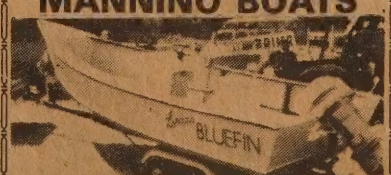

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1 inch double leg folding aluminum frame. Complete with chrome/brass gimbel, overall width 27". High density extra firm polyfoam back & seat. Stury & comfortable.

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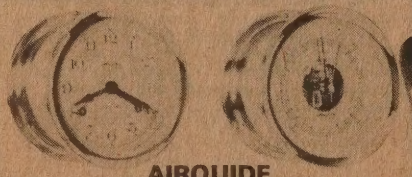

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This professional instrument operates on marine beacon or AM broadcast stations. Automatically driven antenna rotates until it points to the selected beacon or station. Operates on "C" or boats 12 volt battery Aquameter 712

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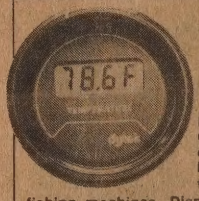

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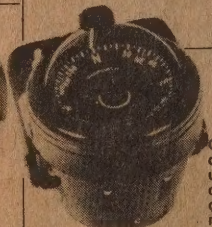

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